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Leadership Matters

As the KYAE system begins a new year on July 1, now is a good time to share with you some of the state- and national-level dialogue in which KYAE is participating in an effort to improve adult education services for students in the Commonwealth as well as across the nation.

As you know, Kentucky was the first state to officially adopt the Common Core Standards (CCS) developed in partnership with the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). As a result, KYAE elected to adopt these same standards. This seamless alignment and adoption of these standards, described as fewer, clearer, higher, for the adult education system will put our students on a path parallel to high school graduates. That path is one of being college- and career-ready.

At this point, KYAE is leading the nation as the only adult education system to make this bold step. We are truly on the cutting edge of increasing the rigor and relevance of our standards and curriculum so that our students are better prepared to successfully enter postsecondary education. In the future, our goal is that adult education students entering postsecondary education would transition directly into degree-bearing credit courses, thus avoiding developmental education. We believe this will ultimately lead to increased retention and graduation rates of adult education students, both GED® grads and those accessing adult education for college prep. With the increasing debt load of college students, adult education programs provide an alternative to using personal resources or student financial aid on non-degree bearing credit developmental education courses.

I want to recognize KYAE staff and the KYAE Common Core Standards "pioneers" in the field who are the reason KYAE is leading the nation in this area. No two adult education staff in the nation have committed more thoughtful and dedicated work in this area than Meryl Becker-Prezocki and Gayle Box of KYAE. Their work with three program directors, Vicki Boyd of Daviess, McLean and Ohio counties; Cris Crowley of Hopkins and Muhlenberg counties; and Betty Myrick of McCracken County, who participated in a year-long pilot of Standards in Action, laid the foundation for our current and future success. Kudos to Meryl, Gayle and all of the adult education staff in the pilot counties.

For the adoption of these standards to be successful, we recognize the importance of increasing teacher quality and effectiveness as a key ingredient to student success. To that end we have continued to raise the minimum requirements for the hiring of new teachers. We must “hire well” by selecting instructors with the academic content and pedagogy knowledge to prepare our students to be college- and career-ready. To support current instructors, a new approach to professional development is imperative. Thus, we implemented a new laser-focused professional development model for three years to equip our teaching force with the necessary skills to understand, unpack and align these new standards with curriculum and lesson plans.

This model is specifically focused on the content areas of English language arts, writing and mathematics. KYAE has adopted this approach in part because:

- Research supports a professional development model that trains program directors to be instructional leaders by building learning communities with their instructors.
- Research also validates that conference attendance has minimal impact on student success.

Furthermore, we must continue advocating against the unacceptable practice and disservice to our students of preparing them only to the educational level of simply passing a high school equivalency exam. It’s critical that we not simply “teach to the test” but instead prepare students for the higher standard of college and career readiness. There are a number of statistics that illustrate that the jobs of the future, and for that matter the jobs of today, require postsecondary education and training.

The trifecta of common core standards, improving teacher quality and effectiveness and laser-focused professional development are critical game-changers for our adult education system.



Sincerely,

Reecie D. Stagnolia, Vice President
Kentucky Adult Education

P.S.

A special thanks and recognition to Janet Hoover – KYAE recently won two communications awards for its public information efforts. KYAE’s 2011 multi-media GED® campaign was recognized with an Award of Merit for Public Information Campaigns from the Kentucky Association of Government Communicators in May. Radio spots promoting free testing, part of the overall campaign, won a separate Award of Merit in the Audio category.

The year-long GED® public information campaign was recognized for radio and TV public service announcements, a radio promotion of free GED® testing, a KET program focusing on GED®, McDonald’s trayliners in 70 counties and a series of news releases.

We recognize student recruitment is an ongoing challenge, further underscoring the importance of Janet’s efforts in this area and in the resulting impact of helping programs meet their enrollment goals. **RS**

2012-13 Fiscal Agents

KYAE wants to extend a sincere “Thank You” to all fiscal agents applying for 2012-13 adult education funding. The RFP process is intense and challenging for all involved, and we greatly appreciate your patience over the past months.

As a result of the statewide competitive RFP process, the breakdown of [fiscal agents](#) in 120 counties follows:

- 49 counties, Kentucky Community and Technical College System
- 40 counties, Boards of Education
- 20 counties, Educational Cooperatives
- 9 counties, Regional Universities
- 2 counties, Community-Based Organizations

RFP process and timeline

- KYAE advertised the opening of the RFP process and posted materials on its website on January 27, 2012.
- A Bidder’s Conference webinar was conducted on February 7, 2012. A technology glitch resulted in Live Meeting recording only the video portion of the webinar; the audio portion was not captured. In lieu of the actual recording, KYAE posted the introductory remarks and pre-submitted questions and answers read during the Bidder’s Conference as well as a written transcript of the Bidder’s Conference proceedings.
- The deadline for all RFP questions was February 14, 2012. A comprehensive list of all questions and answers was posted.
- Completed applications were due to KYAE on March 19, giving applicants seven weeks to complete the application materials.
- KYAE conducted five team training sessions for 44 reviewers consisting of KYAE staff and external readers from partner agencies.
- Each reviewer read and scored eight to 10 applications independently. The teams then met to discuss the proposals and to reach consensus on scores, comments and recommendations. Teams were encouraged, but not required, to include comments.
- All applications recommended for disapproval were read and scored by a second team made up of different reviewers with no knowledge of the initial review. The second team followed the same review process described above and made recommendations for approval or disapproval. Only proposals recommended for disapproval by both teams were ultimately disapproved.
- KYAE Leadership accepted all review team(s) recommendations for approval or disapproval.
- KYAE notified applicants of their proposal’s status May 31-June 7, 2012.
- As KYAE had announced in [August 2011](#) and again as part of the RFP process, in counties where the submitted proposal was not approved by review teams, KYAE solicited a fiscal agent from among those approved through the RFP process and reallocated the funding to that fiscal agent to provide services in the county. All 120 counties will have in-county services.
- As a result of the RFP process, 21 counties have new fiscal agents – five counties in which the fiscal agent voluntarily relinquished the grant; five counties in which there was competition between two applicants; 11 counties in which KYAE reallocated funding.

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FAQs

We've had several questions regarding the RFP process that we want to address:

- **Why does KYAE use a competitive process to choose providers?**
KYAE is required by federal law to periodically conduct a statewide competitive RFP process open to all eligible agencies. [Eligible agencies](#) are defined by federal law. KYAE has no control over agencies applying for funding.
- **Does KYAE plan to have an RFP again next year?**
No. KYAE's intention, as described in the revised Performance and Accountability policy, is to conduct an RFP every four years. [Click here](#) to review the revised policy, which was shared in December 2011 Program Director meetings and posted on the KYAE webpage in May 2012. However, when the federal Workforce Investment Act is reauthorized, the RFP schedule will be altered.
- **Why was the RFP heavily weighted toward past performance?**
In developing the RFP, KYAE must include a number of items specified in federal law. One of those required elements is past effectiveness. Points earned for past performance were not "heavily weighted." The possible 48 points earned for past performance were only **24 percent** of the total points as compared to:
 - The narrative section on Strategic Plan for Service Delivery, worth 82 points or **41 percent** of the total.
 - The narrative section on Staff Quality, 50 points or **25 percent** of the total.
 - The narrative section on past performance, 20 points or **10 percent** of the total.
 - In other words, **76 percent** of the total points were based on narrative writing.
- **Did outside applicants have a built-in competitive advantage over current applicants because they earned points through simply writing a narrative for the past effectiveness section?**
In looking at total RFP points, new applicants did not have an advantage.
 - KYAE must structure the RFP so that all eligible applicants can apply – those currently in the provider network and those who have never been a provider. All applicants must have the ability to earn the same number of points. Again, because we have to consider past performance, the RFP must include a way to look at past performance for both a current applicant and a new applicant in the county.
 - Current providers that have performed well over the past three years had the advantage of earning up to 48 points without having to write any narrative.
 - Also, current providers who have performed well and have a good staff in place have a definite advantage over other applicants in responding to the narrative sections (Strategic Plan for Service Delivery and Staff Quality, 66 percent of the total points) because they are experienced in the areas they are being asked to respond to, experienced in their particular county's needs and in working with local partners. Additionally, counties with experience in the managed program pilots were in a much better position to earn the full 15 points allotted to the three managed program elements than either current providers who did not participate in the pilot or outside applicants.
- **In the reallocation process, why wasn't a board of education from another county chosen to provide the service?** In the past several RFPs, boards of education have not applied to provide services outside their home counties. Several years ago, one board of the education provided adult education services in two counties for a limited time but voluntarily gave up the grant in the second county. It is very challenging for boards of education to provide services in other counties because they do not have physical locations or relationships in multiple counties. However, community and technical colleges and universities have pre-established multi-county regions in which they successfully provide postsecondary education. Therefore, they are set up to provide services in multiple counties, unlike boards of education.

If you have questions or comments relating to the RFP process or especially if you have ideas on how to improve the process for future RFPs, please contact Janet Hoover at Janet.Hoover@ky.gov.

PD calendar posted

For your planning purposes, KYAE has posted the 2012-13 PD calendar. [Click here](#) to see important upcoming dates, including required sessions for new program directors and regional meetings for all program directors.

Engaging the adult education field

KYAE routinely and regularly seeks input and opinions from adult education providers on a wide variety of issues. The input is gathered in various ways, both formally and informally, through face-to-face focus groups, group or individual e-mails, conference calls and by just picking up the phone and calling for a chat. Because of the number of distinct programs (120), if you're not contacted for your input on any particular issue, it may seem that KYAE is not effectively listening to providers. But that is not the case. We will start letting you know in *News to Use* some of the ways we're staying in touch with providers and how we're seeking your input on important topics.

Some recent examples include:

- In May 2012, KYAE staff sought provider input on technology training for instructors.
- In May 2012, KYAE staff asked providers to share ideas for topics to be included on the agenda for new program directors.
- In April 2012, providers were polled about signage needs to determine a statewide purchase of signs for local adult education programs.
- In spring 2012, KYAE initiated monthly conference calls with program directors involved in Accelerating Opportunities pilots.
- In March 2012, KYAE staff convened a group to provide feedback on various software and online curricula products.
- In fall 2011 and spring 2012, KYAE staff sought program director input on the KYAE Common Core Standards English/language arts and math professional development.
- In fall 2011, a group of program directors provided input on the draft version of KYAE's revised Performance and Accountability policy.
- In fall 2011, programs involved in SkillUp Kentucky pilots were brought together to provide a debrief and offer ideas for revising and improving SkillUp.

Policy updates

KYAE has previously announced several upcoming policy changes for 2012-13 – see [May 2012 News to Use](#). Additional changes to be effective July 1, 2012, are below.

➤ **Official Practice Test (OPT)**

As a consequence of GEDTS moving toward computer-based testing (CBT), states have had to re-evaluate some of their testing policies. Current KYAE policy requires that students who plan to retake parts of the GED® tests show improved OPT scores on the subtests not passed. As of July 1, 2012, retaking the OPT will be encouraged but no longer be required by KYAE. As previously announced, KYAE will pilot CBT in three Pearson VUE assessment sites this summer in preparation for GEDTS' intention to eliminate paper and pencil testing.

➤ **PD allocations**

KYAE has now posted the 2012-13 professional development (PD) allocations for all counties. [Click here](#) to see the PD allocations. As you will see, county-level PD allocations are more closely aligned to actual FY 2011-12 PD expenditures by county and that our PD contractors are being funded to cover PD costs directly. This is a reflection of fewer necessary PD expenditures by local programs in light of the continuing implementation of KYAE Common Core Standards (KCCS) PD, not as a result of fewer funds committed to support PD.

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As KYAE has rolled out the KCCS PD, it has become necessary to budget PD resources in a different way by placing more funds in agreements with the PD contractors to deliver KCCS PD, thereby covering expenses on behalf of local programs. Consequently, PD contractors are responsible for arranging KYAE-directed trainings, for which they have been provided funds to accommodate local program staff participants. This alleviates programs from having to pay most training costs, except for mileage and other occasional travel costs.

Programs may use their PD allocation for traveling to PD and KYAE-sponsored meetings, e.g., regional meetings. In a policy change beginning July 1, 2012, the PD allocation MAY NOT be used for salaries. Salaries for staff attending PD sessions and working on PD activities should be planned for and paid out of the core services budget. Using PD funds for salaries was occurring in a small number of counties, so this policy change achieves equity.

To determine the PD allocation amounts, KYAE examined the actual amount spent in fiscal year 2011-2012, expectations for program staff attending specific events (e.g., PD, regional meetings, etc.) and ensuring program staff can avail themselves of the required PD.

Performance measures approved

KYAE's [2012-13 performance measures](#) have been approved by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), U.S. Department of Education.

Important: Please note that on four of the performance measures (entered and retained employment, attainment of a GED® and entry into postsecondary education and training), the targets have significantly decreased. These new targets are due to NRS changes that will discontinue the use of goal setting as a means to identify which students to track. Instead, NRS will require states to automatically report the follow-up measures for all students who meet certain criteria for each measure, i.e., a cohort of students.

During Program Director Regional Meetings scheduled for August 3, 10 and 17, KYAE will provide an in-depth overview of the new cohort method of tracking outcomes. In the meantime, cohort definitions are provided below. More information is available from NRS by [clicking here](#). Also, Terry Tackett has recorded a video outlining AERIN changes related specifically to the two employment measures and how to designate students' employment status. The video is available by [clicking here](#).

- **Entered employment.** States will report this measure for students who are *unemployed and in the labor force* when they enter the program and who exit during the program year.
- **Retained employment.** States will report this measure for students who were not employed at time of entry and in the labor force, who enter employment by the first quarter after exit quarter; and students employed at entry who exit during the program year.
- **Obtain a secondary credential.** States will report this measure for students who *take all GED® tests, or are enrolled in adult high school at the high ASE level*, who exit during the program year.
- **Entry into postsecondary education or training.** States will report this measure for students *who earned a secondary credential while enrolled in adult education, or who had a secondary credential at entry, or who are enrolled in a class specifically designed for transition to postsecondary education or training*, who exit during the program year. In addition, the reporting period for this measure is extended to two years

College planning newsletter

Help with college planning, admissions and financial aid is available through a free online newsletter from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA), the agency that administers state student financial aid programs and provides college planning materials. The monthly newsletter provides timely information about college planning for students of all ages, from elementary through adult.

To be notified via e-mail when the newsletter has been posted online each month, go to www.kheaa.com, click on *Students and Parents* at the top of the page and then click on *Your KHEAA College Connection Newsletters* in the menu on the left. On this site, viewers can sign up for the newsletter notifications and also view back issues.

Valuable resources

[Subscribe](#) to *Contemporary*, the McGraw-Hill Education quarterly e-zine. The newsletter is geared toward adult education and workforce development.

KET's *Tech Teaching Tips* e-newsletter never disappoints with its plethora of resources and tips. The May issue features numerous math resources as well as a list of iPod touch and iPad resources from Kay Combs, assistant director, Scott County Adult Education. If you haven't done so already, [click here](#) to subscribe to this great resource targeted specifically for adult educators.

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